

Appln No. 09/747,677

Amdt date May 25, 2005

Reply to Office action of February 25, 2005

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claims 52-89 will be pending in this application upon entry of the above amendments. Claims 54, 62, 66, 69, 72, and 74 have been amended. The amendments find full support in the original specification, claims, and drawings. No new matter has been added. In view of the above amendments and remarks that follow, reconsideration, reexamination, and an early indication of allowance of claims 52-89 are respectfully requested.

Claims 52-75 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Kaiser et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,615,408) in view of Freeman et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,861,881) and Kim (U.S. Patent No. 6,028,964). Claims 76-89 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Kaiser in view of Freeman and Kim, and further in view of Howe et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,818,438), Kitsukawa et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,282,713), and/or Settle et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,233,253). Applicant respectfully traverses these rejections.

Claims 52, 55, 58, 61, 64, 67, 70, and 73 include the limitation of "a single mask including data for a plurality of mask overlays corresponding to a plurality of regions in one of said plurality of video frames." Claim 76 similarly recites "a single mask including data for a plurality of image overlays corresponding to a plurality of objects in one of said plurality of video frames." The Examiner acknowledges that neither Kaiser nor Freeman et al. teaches these limitations. However, the Examiner relies on Kim to make up for this deficiency.

Applicant respectfully submits that the § 103 rejection is improper. First, even the combination of Kaiser, Freeman, and

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Kim fails to teach or suggest the recited "single mask including data for a plurality of mask overlays corresponding to a plurality of [regions/objects] in one of said plurality of video frames."

Kim is directed to improving coding efficiency for images transmitted in digitally televised systems such as video-telephone, teleconference, and high definition television system, using transmission channels that have limited frequency bandwidth. (See, Col. 1, lines 12-24; Col. 2, lines 5-9). Kim proposes a method and apparatus for efficiently encoding such images. In doing so, Kim, as recognized by the Examiner, identifies the object pixels and the background pixels included in an image frame. This information is then used to extract the contours of objects in the image frame and then efficiently code the contours.

In Kim, the disclosed segmentation mask simply identifies the pixels of the input image that belong to an object, and the pixels of the input image that belong to the background. (See, Col. 2, lines 58-67). The segmentation mask in Kim, however, does not include "data for a plurality of mask overlays corresponding to a plurality of [regions/objects] in one of said plurality of video frames," where these "mask overlays" are then actuated by a viewer to cause "switching from presenting to said viewer a first of one of said plurality of multiplexed video streams to presenting to said viewer a second one of said plurality of multiplexed video streams." (Emphasis added).

The use of Kim's segmentation mask in the system disclosed in Kaiser simply results in a system where object pixels and

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background pixels are identified for an image frame. Kim's segmentation mask, however, does not replace Kaiser's single object HTML table that implements Kaiser's visual highlight. Furthermore, Kim provides no instruction as to how to modify Kaiser's HTML table, and provides no other alternatives to Kaiser's HTML table, that would provide for a "single mask including data for a plurality of mask overlays corresponding to a plurality of [regions/objects] in one of said plurality of video frames." Accordingly, independent claims 52, 55, 58, 61, 64, 67, 70, 73, and 76 are now in condition for allowance.

Claims 53-54, 56-57, 59-60, 62-63, 65-66, 68-69, 71-72, 74-75, and 77-89 are also in condition for allowance because they depend on an allowable base claim, and for the additional limitations that they contain. Specifically with respect to claim 54, 62, 66, 69, 72, 74, even the combination of Kaiser, Freeman, and Kim fail to teach or suggest a "single mask" that includes "location and shape information of said plurality of regions in one of said plurality of video frames." (Emphasis added). As discussed above, the information provided in Kim's segmentation mask simply identifies the object pixels and the background pixels, but does not provide the recited "location and shape information of said plurality of regions." Furthermore, Kim fails to instruct how Kaiser's HTML table that implements a visual highlight for a single object would be modified or replaced to provide a "single mask" that includes "location and shape information of said plurality of regions in one of said plurality of video frames."

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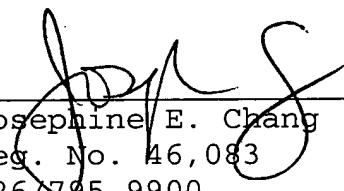
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In view of the above amendments and remarks, reconsideration, reexamination, and an early indication of allowance of claims 52-89 is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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